

WOMEN OF COLOR* IN ELECTIVE OFFICE 1990

CONGRESS In 1990, of the 30 women serving in the 101st U.S. Congress (Senate and House), 3 are women of color: **Representative Cardiss Collins** (D-IL), **Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen** (R-FL), and **Representative Patricia Saiki** (R-HI). No woman of color has ever served in the Senate. A total of 5 Black, 2 Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1 Hispanic women have served in the House of Representatives; they include 6 Democrats and 2 Republicans.

The first Black woman to serve in Congress was **Shirley Chisholm** (D-NY); elected in 1968, she served until 1983. Four other Black women have served in the House: **Yvonne Brathwaite Burke** (D-CA, 1973-1979), **Barbara Jordan** (D-TX, 1973-1979), **Katie Hall** (D-IN, 1982-1985), and **Cardiss Collins** (D-IL). First elected in 1973, Collins is the only Black woman serving in Congress in 1990.

Patsy Takemoto Mink (D-HI), the first Asian/Pacific Islander woman to serve in Congress, was elected in 1964 and served until 1977. **Patricia Saiki** (R-HI), elected in 1986 and currently serving in the 101st Congress, is the second.

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), who won a special election in August 1989, is the first Cuban-American (female or male) and the first Hispanic woman ever elected to Congress.

STATEWIDE ELECTIVE EXECUTIVE OFFICES In 1990, of 46 women serving in statewide elective executive offices, 2 are women of color; both serve as elected secretaries of state.¹

March Fong Eu (D) was first elected secretary of state of California in 1974; she became the first Asian/Pacific Islander woman elected statewide to top executive office in any state. Eu, who was also the first woman ever elected secretary of state of California, is currently serving her fourth term.

Rebecca Vigil-Giron (D), who is Hispanic, was elected secretary of state of New Mexico in 1986.

STATE LEGISLATURES In 1990, of the 1,273 women state legislators serving nationwide, 133, or 10.5%, are women of color. Twenty-nine are senators and 104 are representatives; all but 2 are Democrats.

Black women hold 100 seats in state legislatures. There are 19 senators and 81 representatives serving in 32 states; all are Democrats.

Asian/Pacific Islander women hold 16 seats in state legislatures. There are 6 senators and 10 representatives serving in 3 states (HI, ID, OR); all but 2 are Democrats.

Hispanic women hold 12 seats in state legislatures. There are 3 senators and 9 representatives serving in 7 states (AZ, CA, CO, NM, NY, TX, WA); all are Democrats.

Native American women hold 5 seats in state legislatures. There are 1 senator and 4 representatives serving in 4 states (AK, MT, NM, OK); all are Democrats.

COUNTY GOVERNING BOARDS² In 1989, 75 Black women held positions on county governing bodies, comprising 10.8% of the 696 such seats held by Black officials. In comparison, 31 Black women served on county governing bodies in 1977, holding 9.3% of the 334 such seats held by Blacks.³

*We use "women of color" throughout when referring to Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Native American women as a group. We understand that both the terms "women of color" and "minority women" are problematic, but know of no preferable inclusive term.

¹These numbers do not include: officials appointed to state cabinet-level positions; officials elected to executive posts by the legislature; members of the judicial branch; or elected members of university Boards of Trustees or Boards of Education. Former state representative Hannah Atkins (D), who is Black, serves as the appointed secretary of state of Oklahoma.

²Different data collection methods are used and different states are included in county and municipal figures from CAWP, Joint Center for Political Studies (JCPS), and National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO); therefore data from these sources should not be combined or compared. No data exist for Asian/Pacific Islander or Native American women serving on county governing boards or municipal councils.

³JCPS figures. Data on Hispanic women serving on county governing boards are not included because figures available from NALEO are for all elected county officials, not just county governing board members.

A note to users of our fact sheets: Please credit the Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), National Information Bank on Women in Public Office, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University.

MUNICIPAL OFFICES¹ In July 1990, of the 324 Black mayors serving nationwide, 70, or 21.6% are women.² Carrie Saxon Perry of Hartford, CT is the only Black woman mayor serving in a U.S. city with a population over 100,000; Hartford is the 121st largest city in the U.S.. Including Perry, 4 Black women serve as mayors in cities with populations over 30,000.

In 1989, Black women held 651, or 22.6%, of the 2,882 municipal council seats held by Black officials. In comparison, 12, or 7.4%, of the 162 Black mayors serving in 1977 were women. Black women held 197, or 12.6%, of the 1,560 municipal council seats held by Blacks in 1977.³

In 1989, 22, or 12.5%, of the 176 Hispanic mayors are women.⁴

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT WOMEN IN ELECTIVE OFFICE

Congress In 1990, women hold 30 seats in the 101st U.S. Congress; there are 2 women in the Senate and 28 women in the House of Representatives. Women hold 5.6% of the 535 available seats — 2.0% of all Senate seats and 6.4% of all House seats. A total of 129 women have served in the U.S. Congress to date — 16 in the Senate and 115 in the House. (Two women have served in both the Senate and the House.)

Statewide Elective Executive Offices In 1990, women hold 46, or 13.9%, of the 330 statewide elective executive offices⁵ across the country, including 3 governors and 4 lieutenant governors. In 1977 there were 29 women serving in statewide elective executive offices, including 2 governors and 3 lieutenant governors.

State Legislatures In 1990, women hold 17.1% of all seats in state legislatures. 1,273 of the 7,461 state legislators serving in 1990 are women. Women hold 267, or 13.4%, of the 1,995 state senate seats and 1,006, or 18.4%, of the 5,466 state house or assembly seats. In 1977, women held 688, or 9.1%, of the available seats.

County Governing Boards In 1988, women held 8.9% of all seats on county governing boards.⁶ 1,653 of the 18,483 county governing board members serving in 1988 were women. In 1977, women held 656, or 4.0%, of the available seats.

Municipal Offices In 1985, in the states for which data were available, women comprised 14.3% of mayors and municipal council members.⁷ There were 14,672 women elected to these posts out of a total of 102,329 officials. In 1977, women held 9,406, or 8.1%, of the available seats.

¹Different data collection methods are used and different states are included in county and municipal figures from CAWP, Joint Center for Political Studies (JCPS), National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) and National Conference of Black Mayors; therefore data from these sources should not be combined or compared. No data exist for Asian/Pacific Islander or Native American women serving on county governing boards or municipal councils.

²Adjusted National Conference of Black Mayors figures.

³JCPS figures.

⁴NALEO August 1989 figures. Data on Hispanic women serving on municipal councils are not included because figures available from NALEO are for all elected municipal officials, not just municipal council members.

⁵These numbers do not include: officials appointed to state cabinet-level positions; officials elected to executive posts by the legislature; members of the judicial branch; or elected members of university Boards of Trustees or Boards of Education.

⁶There is no county commissioner equivalent in CT, RI, or VT.

⁷Includes data from the District of Columbia. Complete data were not available for the following states: IL, IN, KY, MO, PA, WI.